

Robert S. Allen and Paul J. Scott

Red Arms Ships Swarm to Cuba

WASHINGTON — Russia is stepping up its arms shipments to Communist Cuba. A record 213 ships unloaded at Cuban ports the week ending Sept. 29.

This arms-bearing traffic brought the largest number of vessels to Cuba during a seven-day period since the Russians launched their crash program in mid-July to establish a military bastion there.

More than half of these merchants of death were Soviet bloc ships carrying additional missiles, MIG21 jet interceptors, counter - electronic equipment, landing craft, and PT boats armed with ranges up to 80 miles.

This is the alarming report Rep. James Fulton, R-Pa., turned over to House leaders after a two-day on-the-spot inspection-briefing tour of the Navy's strategic base at Guantanamo, Cuba.

PROBERS GET DATA— Fulton, a member of the House Space Committee, also reported his findings to Rep. A. Paul Kitchin's Special House Investigation subcommittee, which is probing arms shipments to Cuba.

Fulton told the bipartisan group of legislators, and this column, that the ship totals were given by naval intelligence officers during the Guantanamo briefing arranged for his congressional party, which included four other senators and representatives.

The intelligence experts estimated that two-thirds of the 213 ships carried either arms or military personnel from Russia. The remaining one-third unloaded such supplies as cotton, rice, oil and jet fuel.

Fulton also revealed that he

got a first-hand look at a number of Soviet bloc cargo ships. Accompanied by a fighter escort, the Navy flew him over the ships as they made their way toward Cuban ports near Guantanamo.

STRANGE REPORTING— This foreboding report was in contrast to Undersecretary George W. Ball's soothing State Department report to the Kitchin committee on Oct. 3. Ball reported:

"In the last few weeks we have read much in the newspapers of the military buildup of Cuba by the Soviet Union. Quite clearly it does not constitute a threat to the United States.

"Since July, when the volume of Soviet military shipments to Cuba suddenly vaulted upward, 87 shiploads arrived in Cuban ports."

Ball's figure of 87 shiploads of arms is at variance with a Navy report sent the State Department the day before he testified. This naval estimate, dated Oct. 2, fully supported Fulton's figures as obtained in his Sept. 29-30 briefing.

Kitchin, vigorously questioning much of Ball's testimony, plans to recall the undersecretary this week to quiz him on the naval shipping data.

GETTING THE FACTS— Already Kitchin has requested the Defense Department to furnish detailed information on the Soviet arms buildup to determine the accuracy of a number of other statements made by Ball.

For example, the North Carolina legislator wants the full story on the four "cruise-type" SS-N1 missiles which the State

Department now admits are in Cuba.

When he appeared before the committee, Ball contended that these missiles have a range of only 20 to 35 miles. Kitchin challenged this, stating he had information that the missiles can travel more than 130 nautical miles when guided by ships or planes.

Ball, strongly contending he had no knowledge of this, agreed to check further with the department's intelligence aides to determine the exact range. He also said he would investigate reports that Soviet submarines were escorting ships to Cuba, and report to the committee on the exact number of Russian MIGs in Cuba. Ball said there were 60 "older type MIG jet aircraft." Kitchin's information showed "more than 200, including 32 MIG21s, the newest interceptor."

CUBAN FLASHES— Speaker John W. McCormack, D-Mass., has quickly blocked a State Department bid to switch the congressional probe of Soviet arms shipments to Cuba from Rep. Kitchin's committee to the House Affairs Committee. He personally requested the House Administration Committee to provide Kitchin sufficient funds to keep his investigation going while Congress is in recess.

Senate Democratic Whip Herbert Humphrey has joined a bipartisan group of senators backing President Kennedy to establish and support with arms and money a Cuban government-in-exile. Humphrey told the President that such a move by the administration would eventually lead to Castro's overthrow.

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"In the last few weeks, we have read much in the newspapers of the military buildup in Cuba by the Soviet Union. Quite clearly it does not constitute a threat to the United States."

"Since July, when the volume of Soviet military shipments to Cuba suddenly vaulted upward, 35 shiploads arrived in Cuban ports."

Ball's figure of 85 shiploads of arms is at variance with a Navy report sent to the State Department the day before he testified. This naval estimate, dated Oct. 2, fully supported Fulton's figures as obtained in his Sept. 29-30 briefing.

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